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A Just PLEA
AGAINST
SWEARING.

And against the
National Worship
OF
ENGLAND:



Briefly demonstrating the Grounds and
Reasons why we choose rather to Suffer, then
to Bow to either of them.

By a Sufferer for his Testimony against them, known by the
name of J^a. Pierson.

*The blood-thirsty hateth the upright, but the just seek his soul, Prov. 29.
ver. 10.*

*They build up Sion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity, Micah 3. 10.
By Swearing and lying, killing and stealing, and committing adultery they
break out, and blood toucheth blood; therefore shall the Land mourn,
Hos. 4. 2.*

*And it shall come to pass in that day (saith the Lord) that the heart of the
King shall perish, and the hearts of the Princes: and the Priests shall be
astonished, and the Prophets shall wonder, Jer. 4. 9.*

*For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travel, and the anguish as of her
that brought forth her first child; the voice of the daughter of Sion that
hath bewailed herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Wo is me now, for my
soul is wearied because of murderers.*

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(11)
*A just plea against Swearing, and against the
National Worship of England, &c.*

IN all ages and generations, great and manifold have bin the snares of the enemy to catch and intrap the innocent; among others in this age, this hath been made much use of, to persecute, imprison banish, and make havock of the goods of thousands in this nation of *England* within these few years; viz. not swearing and denying those things which are contrary to Christian practices, and the imposed Forms of Worship, as their practice do evidently demonstrate, by enjoining and forcing men and women with penalties of outward laws, to own and bow unto such a Forme of Worship, such a Priest, such a time and place as they shall appoint, contrary to the practice and example of those that feared the Lord in all ages, as the Scriptures of truth do testify: And though much have been spoken by other friends in several parts of this nation tending to the clearing of this truth, which might have satisfied any unbiassed Judgement, and caused them to cease persecuting upon this account, and let the innocent go free; yet notwithstanding being tossed upon their Horns from one to another, and from place to place, least the persecuters of those places where I suffer being not desirous to be informed of the truth should not seek after what hath been spoken by others a far off, and so should continue willingly ignorant of the just grounds and reasons why we choose rather to suffer for the testimony of the truth revealed in us, than obey mans will commanding the contrary; and that it is not Stubbornness and self-will, as it is alleaged against us; knowing the terror of the Lord, and the danger they are running unto by persecuting the innocent, it lyes on me in love to their immortal souls to clear my conscience towards them why we cannot Swear, nor Bow to their Worships set up by the authority of the Nation: so whether they will hear or forbear I may be clear in the sight of God, they in excusable.

First, As concerning Swearing we finde it forbidden by Christ, who

is our leader and our example all along in his words while on earth in that former body which suffered at Jerusalem: also we finde the same Spirit which spoke through him all that is contained of him in the Scriptures of truth, bearing witness unto the same Truth in us, which gives us assurance of the infallibility and truth thereof; and that there is in it no falshood nor lyes, 1. *Joh.* 2. 27. & Chap 3. 24 & 4. 13. The words are plain *Math.* 5. 34. and *Isa.* 5. 12. where all Swearing is straightly and absolutely forbidden, without any wresting of the words, adding thereto, or diminishing from them.

Object. But the common Objection is, that it is forswearing and vain swearing that is there forbidden.

Ans. If he had forbidden no more, he had no need to have given them any new precept, but turned them back to *Moses*, as he did in many other cases; because *Moses* his words seemed to be of more credit among them than his: *Moses* they knew (said the *Jews*) and the Prophets, but him they know not; false swearing and vain swearing were strictly forbidden by him, but these words have the same Emphasis, force and analogy as the precedent verses, where the Law saith, Thou shalt not commit adultery, the Law took hold on the outward fact, and punished not until then; but he who came and comes to fulfil the Righteousness of the Law, reaches more home, searches the heart, judges the thoughts, and condemns the very looking on a woman to lust after her, cuts down the transgressor at the root, where by it might not bud again. So here the Law saith, Thou shalt not forswear thy self; but I (saith he, going neerer to the root of the matter) say unto you, Swear not at all, and instances in particular wayes whereby they did swear, neither by Heaven, nor by Earth, nor by Jerusalem; nor by as much as the hair of thy head; nor, (as *James* guided by the same Spirit saith) by any other Oath, so that by these words, any other Oath, swearing by Books, and kissing them, is as strictly, plainly, positively and solemnly forbidden, as by Heaven, Earth, Jerusalem &c. For Jerusalem was in those dayes (being the place where the Lord had placed his Name, and appeared unto his people) of great esteem among the *Jews*, and in their blinde zeal by custom and tradition (through ignorance of the God that appeared there) as much adored as the Book is now by those who know not in Spirit and Truth, that living God who revealed unto his people the truth therein declared; so that you now, as they then, suck the shell instead of the kernel, and take the husk for the grain, adore the place, instead of him that fills and comprehends all places;

as they had offended jointly or severally, they were called again unto the Lord by his servants the prophets to humiliation for their former offences, and to make solemn Vows and covenants not to backslide again, so that the end of this was to renew the Vows, and bring into the covenant of their God an apostatized and backsliden people, neither did the prophets require it of those who had not backsliden, as now it is. In the beginning when man was in the image of God there was no covenant breaking, and so consequently no need of renewing it by swearing and Vowing; so that the cause of this was hardness of heart, which from the beginning was not so.

4thly. The cause of that swearing required by *Moses* was Apostasy from the Lord, and yet left without an external penalty if they did not swear; and now those are required to swear, who are in Covenant with the Lord, to set up man above God head of the Church, whereof Christ alone we own our head so that the matter requiring oaths is altered and turned quite contrary.

5thly. Another Objection is, that an oath of confirmation is an end of all strife; how shall we believe one another (say they) or decide controversies without an Oath.

Ans. When man was in the image of God, there was no deceitful dealing nor strife, so consequently no need of swearing to decide it: as strife and deceit brought in swearing, so those that are come to the Son, are come to the image of God out of strife, unto that state which was before strife and contention, and swearing was: Take away the cause the effect will cease, come to the Son and he will make free from strife and contention the causes of swearing, and consequently from swearing it self among us who are come to the Son, who fulfill the Law.

6thly. As for the manner of swearing among the *Jewes*, *Moses* ryes them not to any form of words, but leaves it to the freedom of their own spirits, both when they renewed their Covenant with the Lord, as also in testifying the truth between man and man, which condemnes the binding to a form of words, and kissing bookes.

Among other nations they swore by that which they esteemed most, as by their idol Gods which most nations had appropriated to themselves; some by *Malcham*, others by the Life and prosperity of their Emperours; as by the life of *Pharaoh*, by the prosperity and fortune of *Cesar*; whatsoever they did

most

most adore, they swore by, and kissed them; in imitation of this the Nation of *England* setting the book (as the Papists the Crucifix) in the room of God, swear by it as though it were their God, so that in this very point (though they call themselves Christians) they take the heathen for their example, not Christ nor *Moses*.

So the sum is this of all that hath been spoken, *Moses* required it of the *Jews* a particular Nation to whom the Law was given because of Covenant breaking, bound no other nation to it, nor added no penalty in case they did not swear, but left them to the Lord to deal with as he saw fit, never required such oaths as these neither for matter nor manner, nor any heathen Kings, of Christians; it was a sufficient plea for them when brought before rulers to say, *Christianus sum*, and they were urged no further to swear, as knowing their freedom that they could not swear, and believing the verity of their speech that they could not lye; and they that are come to Christ are come out of swearing in general to Yea and Nay, or if the matter requires (being not bound so narrowly to such words) to make what we aver more credible, to call God to record (as *Paul* did) that it is, or is not, so.

So it is, clear and evident to any unprejudiced Spirit what we suffer for our pure obedience to Christs commands, and our blood will bestow any a burden for our persecutors to bear in the day when all that they have done shall be layd open, bare & naked before them; neither Kings, nor Princes, nor all the powers of the earth, shall be able to deliver them from the righteous judgements of the Lord doe unto them for their deeds done in the body. Oh be ashamed and blush, call not your selves Christians any more until you repent of your former actings, put away your abominations, cease to do evil, let the innocent go free, and be wholly changed in your Spirits, then come and let us reason together, perhaps some of you who are not altogether hardened in heart, seared in conscience, and given up to reprobation may finde place of repentance, which is the desire of my soul.

As for your Worship, it differs nothing in the ground from the worship of those you call heathens, but of them both is worst, because you profess to know more than they, and being in the same persecuting bloud thirsty nature practice no better than the darkest of them: All nations walk in the name of their God, what hath most influence upon their Spirits and is most sutable to their tempers and inclinations,

inclinations or naturall Climate wherein they have their being, that they love best and follow, every nation according to it's custome & tradition set up some way or other to worship they know not what; So the right eye being blinded, and the light of Christ not heeded, having nothing else to guide them, are led by the Prince of the power of the air, to do whatsoever their apostatized hearts lusts after; and either through prescriptions, customes or tradition, imagining there is some Deity to be adored, being ignorant who he is, nor how he is to be known, in their dark apprehensions and chambers of imagery, frame and invent to themselves in their own will a form and way of worship, contrary to the true worship of the Lord, which is in Spirit and truth, and would make the heads of the nations defender of their worships, whereby they are often overthrown; and Cain-like, murder those that know better, and cannot bow to it. Some for *Mahomet* and the *Alcaron*, some for *Masses* and Images without; others, their imaginations and corrupt wils, as Common-Prayers (so called) Directories; some for Church-Faith, sprinkling of Babes with a little water; Bread and Wine, which they call Sacraments; all agree inforcing to it by outward compulsion, and vvreisting maintenance for it, as vvell from those vvho ovvn it not, as those vvho do own it: thus all the vvorld lyes in vvickednesse, and like *Nebuchadnezzars* Image, in confusion; some in more grosse darknesse, others being not so deep in the pit of degeneration, see those that are deeper in the fall; and because they are not in the same sphear and height of the Climate to it, not agreeing in every particular, kill, and murder one another about their religions, each esteeming his ovvn best, vvould tain maintain it, and keep it up as *Cain*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Herod*, *Nero*, and others of the same Nature did; and to him that hath the longest svvord all bow, call him the defender of their Faith, and svwear him so, and bind themselves vvith an oath to submit to vvhatsoever vvorship they set up, and vvhosoever vvil not, at the sound of their musick, must bear the penalty of their Lavv provided to maintain it: vvhat doth the vvorship of the English Nation differ from this? and wherein are they better than the fore-mentioned, their practice being the same in every particular.

In the beginning God made man perfect, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul, his life and his breath vvvas from God his Maker, and in him he could have vvithstood the subtil persvasions of the Serpentine vvildom, and cast

jangling
s, Choristers,
and Organs.

cast it off from creeping and twisting about him, but not standing in the Counsel of his maker, but giving heed to that which would make him wise to know good and evil; that he might practice what he would or liked best, if he liked evil he could cover it over and call it good, and on the contrary good evil, whereby he might condemn it as all the World in that state do at this day. Now man being gone from the Counsel of God became dark, lost his way, gropes in the dark, knowes not what he is doing, nor whither he is going, being from that which God hath given to guide him, all that a man doth is evil, and that continually. Now to be from the light the witness in the conscience for God to guide him, is sin and iniquity whatsoever a man doth; for obedience unto the witness, the light, the unction, or the Spirit of Truth in us makes us the Sons of God, and our works perfect and acceptable unto him; and he that is not come to own the witness of God, which is Christ, or the anointing seed what pretence or colour soever he may have being not led by that, he is none of Christs, his deeds are evil, and in his own will involves himself more and more in darkness and confusion; there is no other way, no other name whereby a man may come to the Father, but by Christ the Light, the witness for God in man: Wandering and going astray from that is rebellion, witchcraft and disobedience; to walk close with it, and to be lead by it, is the perfect and acceptable service to God the Father, who through his Son, his anointing seed, his Light (which he caused to shine out of darkness) hath called us to be witnesses for his name at this day; and this Light which we own for our leader was given to lighten the Gentiles, and is the glory of his people who obey it, but the condemnation of the old world lying in wickedness; now the woman is coming out of the wilderness clothed with the Light of the Sun, and the Moon under her feet, shining gloriously upon the tops of the high Mountains and Hills, condemning the old World, and by its heat causing the old Heaven and the old Earth to melt away; and our work in this age being to pull down the old building of *Babylon*, viz. Confusion, to cast down her strong holds and imaginations, and to scatter all the old rubbages thereof, which must be done ere any stone of the new building be layd, or a new Creation, a new Heaven and a new Earth witnessed; this seems a fowl work, and an unacceptable piece of service unto those who are heaping up confusions, building of *Babels* imaginations, Castles in the aire, and know no other way to re-enter into *Paradise* from whence they came forth, the higher they are gone in this confused

building, the more unwilling they are to leave it and the greater cross it is to pull it down, yet this I asseert for an infallible & undoubted truth, that before a new Creation (*vid.*) a new Heavaven and a new Earth can be witnessed, every man and woman must come to that which is buried under all, and burdened with the rubbages and stones of their old corruption; and though it be cross to their own wills and destructive to their own building, yea the condemnation of all that was before it, for every one must be redeemed through judgment, must pass through the fire upon the point of the sword and take a cross to his own will before he can enter into life, or be Christs disciple; now this is the reason that we are hated and persecuted because we are sent

as Lights into the World, to condemn the old world for Jo. 19.3. their wickedness, they loving their evil deeds cannot stand 21.20. in the Light which passeth true judgment; least their deeds should be detected, and their torment begin (as they suppose) before the time; this is my advice and counsel to all who are yet enemies to God, and hate his appearance, that they come to the Light to have their evil deeds discovered, stand in the judgment, bear the Cross, let judgment pass upon all which cannot stand in the light, and so through the Cross be united unto, and one with that birth to which there is no condemnation, but hath peace with God, and joyes in him for ever; otherwise there is no peace to the wicked, though he may cover himself a while with vailles of darkness in the body, yet their tabernacle being layed aside in that state without reconciliation to God in his own way, as before mentioned, there is no more place of repentance nor redemption from the grave, no end of their torment for ever; the spirit which abode not in the truth hath no peace with God, neither is there any place to hide from him; therefore be advised, stand in the judgment of God till the enemy be condemned and done avay; then will your peace be everlasting.

Finally, this is the sum in brief of what hath been spoken, that whatsoever form or way of Worship any Nation or particular person or persons sets up, not guided and directed thereunto by the Light of the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Light which is Christ, in his own conscience whatsoever he or they may pretend, Worship they know not what, their own inventions, conforming outwardly to whatsoever the powers of the Earth sets up, but inwardly their own lusts, what is most agreeable and pleasing to their tempers and Constitutions; some profess Christianity in words, being clothed in sheeps cloathing, make outward

vvard likenesses and imitations of the Saints, haueing their vvord to trade vvithal, set their thresholds by their thresholds, but inwardly ravening wolves, by their fruits they are known; some are bare and naked without the sheeps cloathing, the Saints words, as the heathens and *Indians*, of whom there may be more hopes to own the truth, than those that have covered themselves over with the large fig leaves of deceit and hypocrisie: Others make mixtures of the Saints words, and heathenish customes and traditions of their fathers, but still phable to conform to whatsoever the powers of the land requires, will hazard nothing for their religion, this they call wisdom and pollicy; had *Daniel* done so he had not bin cast into the Lyon Den, nor the three children into the fiery furnace, neither had any need to suffer under the heathen Emperours, had they obey'd them in what they required, though they were counted the highest powers, and had Laws of their own making on their sides, as now they haue; yet they that knew the true and living God in all ages, obeyed him above man, be his power never so great, and his Lawes never so strict to cause them to suffer for their obedience: And vve can solemnly aue at this time, & call the Lord of Heaven & Earth to vvitness that vve suffer for no other thing than the testimony of a pure conscience towards God, namely, because vve cannot Svwear, being a breach of his Commands, nor ovvn the vvorship set up in this Nation by a compulsive power, contrary (as we are perswaded in our own consciences) to the will of the Lord to us manifested.

Now if there be any tenderness of Spirit, or any spark of ingenuity left in you (as there was in Saul when he confessed that *David* was more righteous than himself) consider, and lay it seriously to heare, what comfort can any receive in that which he is not lead unto by the Spirit of truth, and the perswasions of his own conscience; and what evil or detriment can it be to you or your worship, to leave us to our perswasions; you your selves having the same liberty we desire: Novv be cool in your spirits a vvhile, and lay aside your carnal vveapons & prisons; bring all to the touchstone, to the ballance of the sanctuary, truth will lose nothing by tryal, and that which is able to stand in the Light, in the fire, in the ballance to be tryed, let it come out, let it stand and continue, and be owned for truth for ever; and what cannot stand, let it be condemned, burnt up, and cast out for ever; so the controuersie between us and you will be decided, (as betvvien *Elijah* and *Baals* priests) and the contention will cease, without banishing our persons,

or Spilling of blood ; which if ye do, ye will have no cause to repent of this;

And this I leave with you for a testimony *ere I conclude, that if they leave not off to usurp Gods throne, and take away his prerogative, and leave the Lord alone to guide and direct in his own Worship, who manifestly unto all what he requires of them, verily he wil come against you as a Lyon, and deal vvith you as traytors to his ovvn dignity, and leave you for an everlasting reproach to all generations : Therefore be vvise, O ye Kings and Rulers of the Earth, hearken unto the voice of the Lord, and come out of *Babylon* (her fall is nigh at hand) that ye be not partakers of her sins, lest ye partake of her plagues.



THE END.

